

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /084 W

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R 051409Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4204

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 5748

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PLO UR SY

SUBJECT: ZOHAYR MUHSEN SOUNDSOFF--AGAIN--ABOUT SOVIET POLICY

REF: (A) BEIRUT 5452; (B) BEIRUT 5517

1. ZOHAYR MUHSEN, LEADER OF SYRIAN-BACKED SAIQA AND
HEAD OF PLO MILITARY DEPT., WAS AGAIN IN NEWS MAY 3
CRITICIZING SOVIET POLICY TOWARD PALESTINIANS. MUHSEN,
WHO HAD BAILED OUT OF PLO DELEGATION UNDER 'ARAFAT WHICH
JUST WOUND UP SIX-DAY VISIT TO USSR, TOLD LOCAL DAILY
AL JARIDA HE THOUGH MOSCOW HAD MADE "MISTAKE" IN
OFFERING TO GUARANTEE ISRAEL'S SECURITY WITHIN 1967
BORDERS. ELABORATING HIS VIEWS, MUHSEN IS QUOTED AS
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FOLLOWS: "PARTIES THAT REALLY NEED GUARANTEES ARE PAL-

ESTINIANS FIRST, AND ARAB COUNTRIES SECOND. I CANNOT
UNDERSTAND HOW GROMYKO COULD MAKE MISTAKE OF PICTURING
A PYRAMID UPSIDE DOWN..."

2. ASKED ABOUT HIS REASONS FOR NOT RPT NOT ACCOMPANYING
'ARAFAT TO MOSCOW, MUHSEN REPORTEDLY ASSERTED THAT HE WAS
RELUCTANT TO JOINT DELEGATION "THAT DOES NOT HAVE SPECIFIC
TASK" AND STRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT TIME HAS COME TO "PLACE
OUR (I.E., PLO) RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION IN SERIOUS
AND ORGANIZED FRAMEWORK." MUHSEN DENIED THERE WERE
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIMSELF AND PLO EXCOMM BUT AC-
KNOWLEDGED THAT HE "POSSIBLY" HAD SOME TROUBLES WITH 'ARAFAT.

3. COMMENT: SUSPICION GROWING AMONG LOCAL OB-
SERVERS AS MUHSEN CONTINUES PUBLIC SNIPING AT SOVS IS
THAT HE HAS AT LEAST ACQUIESCENCE OF HIS SYRIAN BACKERS.
ONE VERSION CIRCULATING HERE, WHICH TENDS TO BE BORNE

OUT BY HIS ADMISSION OF TROUBLES WITH 'ARAFAT, IS THAT
MUHSEN IS MIFFED OVER RECENT PLO EXCOMM REFUSAL TO
APPOINT HIM AS PLA COMMANDER TO REPLACE DEPOSED
MAJ. GEN MISBAH BUDAYRI. (EXCOMM REPORTEDLY
NAMED BRIG. MUHAMMED WALID JAMMUNS AS ACTING
PLA COMMANDER LATE LAST MONTH.) WHILE PROCESS OF
REPLACING BUDAYRI, WHO HAD BECOME CONTROBERSIAL
FIGURE IN PLO CIRCLES, COULD INDEED HAVE GENERATED
HEAT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN MUHSEN AND 'ARAFAT, WE FIND
IT HARD TO BELIEVE MUHSEN WOULD HAVE LAUNCHED INTO
DIATRIBES AGAINST SOVIET UNION FOR THIS REASON ALONE.
SEEMS MORE PLAUSIBLE THAT MUHSEN--AND BY EXTENSION
SARG--MAY HAVE DEVELOPED REAL DOUBTS ABOUT AND
SERIOUS RESERVATIONS TOWARD RECENT TURNS IN SOVIET
ME POLICY.

GODLEY

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